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Sincerely Yours,
F. A. Wiggin.

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Cubes and Spheres

In

Human Life.

BY

F. A. WIGGIN.

"*Every human soul is a sculptor.*"

BOSTON:
BANNER OF LIGHT PUB. CO.
9 BOSWORTH STREET.
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CUBES AND SPHERES IN HUMAN LIFE.

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TO

My Beloved Parents,

THIS BOOK

IS

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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CHAPTER I.

CUBES AND SPHERES.

IN the beginning was the Law, and the Law was with God, and the Law was God.

Inherent in every law is a principle which must gain manifestation through the process of evolution. Each advancing stage of planetary unfoldment from the nebulous fire-mist, from the darkness brooding upon the face of the waters, until the fiat, "Let there be light," clothed this whirling globe with life and beauty, as a fitting abode for that topmost flower on evolution's tree — Man — all this marvellous crescendo in Nature's mighty anthem only bespeaks the infinite necessity of the Eternal Mind to express its creative thought. All Nature is but the emanation, the throbbing energy of that Primeval Flame which gives force and potency to every law. All life is the mighty pulsation of the Great Breath, and progress is its watchword — the grandest of all laws.

But "the mills of the gods grind slow, though they

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grind exceeding fine." Eons of years are required to perfect a planet's birth, and yet impulsive, impatient man essays to mount his ladder of growth at a single bound.

The grace and beauty of an Apollo lurks long in the rough-hewn boulder from the quarry before its majestic outlines are gradually uncovered and revealed under the skilful hand of the artist. The diamond from the mine, jagged, misshapen, almost opaque, suggests nothing of the brilliance and fire to be released under the polishing wheel.

Similarly, human beings are like unto cubes until the attrition of Life's experiences by which Law is comprehended, rounds off the angular corners, until the sharp edges are wrought upon by the design of the Infinite Artist, when the cube becomes a sphere — the fittest emblem of Deity — whose image and likeness man is intended to reflect.

The grinding, crushing process of Nature comes to appear as a fact sometime, in the life of almost every one. Only a spiritual discrimination, enriched with that wisdom which experience alone can give,

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will be able to perceive that each expression of life is both the grist and the gristmill, the masticator and the masticated.

Deity, as expressed in Nature and in man, may be called a mammoth machine, composed of an infinite number of parts, all working in a beautiful, harmonious observance of perfect order, whenever individuals representing parts of the great machine are properly geared or adjusted, and consequently are in right relation to the whole. But whether adjusted or maladjusted, in accord or discord, humanity belongs to the machinery of Nature. The first state, the primal type, whether in the domain of mind or matter, is at best prismatical and usually rough, jagged, and most distinguished for severity of outline. The never-ceasing grind of evolution's wheels rubs off the sharp and angular lines common to all primal states, and this crucial process is not always comprehended as a kind stroke of Nature, until, as a result of it, the soul becomes conscious of its purpose in a symmetrical or spherical self-hood, adapted to a frictionless cosmos.

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Advisedly, have we considered man as a wheel, or cog, in this stupendous machine of Nature. He is not dispossessed thereby of innate and natural generative energy to help propel the machinery of which he is a part. He is the grist and the grinder, the involved and the evolved. In a comprehensive conception, man is not a machine at all, but a specific conception will certainly determine him one.

> "It slayeth and it saveth, nowise moved
> Except into the working out of doom:
> Its threads are Love and Life; and Death and Pain
> The shuttles of its loom.
>
> "Such is the Law which moves to righteousness,
> Which none at last can turn aside, or stay;
> The heart of it is Love, the end of it
> Is peace and consummation sweet. Obey"!

The cold marble statue is not the artist, and yet it speaks, in degree, the artistic ability of the sculptor. The sculptor can be said to live in the statue, it is a part of his life. The vibrating artistic energy of the painter throbs in every rolling wave of his pictured ocean, and is the motive power propelling his mirrored boat as she dashes onward, cutting and

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spurning his realistic sea. The baseball player hurls from his hand the sphere, and it cuts through the atmosphere with the velocity of the wind. You do not see the player follow the ball, and yet it goes no further than he goes.

The machine of Nature is not man, yet it is a theatre for his life's expression. Man is the machine, and he is also the intelligent motive power which inspires it with activity. To portray man as a piece of blind, unintelligent mechanism is to do him a great injustice, and to ignore his real entity. For man is a more important actor in the running of this universe than has ever been recognized. He is the engine and the engineer. He is the forester, with axe in hand, who will make a smoother, riper world for the occupancy of generations yet unborn. His importance as a machine must not be subordinated to his still greater and more sublime importance as a mechanic. The soul, inheriting creative impulse and power, is co-worker with the Over-Soul in its evolutionary purposes; the planet ripens as mankind advances.

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"But," says the Spirit of All Time to the Spirit of To-day,
"Tell us, how about your men?
Shall they like live automatons, still drudge their lives away?
When the rivers, tides and lightnings join to help them on their way"?

Says the Spirit of All Time to the Spirit of To-day,
"Tell us, how about your men?
Yes, harness every river above the cataract's brink,
And then unharness man.

"To earth's reservoir of fire let your giant shaftings sink,
And scourge your dredging thunderbolts — but give man time to think;
Throw your bridles on the rivers, curb them at the cataract's brink,
And then unharness man."

Says the Spirit of All Time, "In this climax of the years,
Make no machine of man.
Your harnessed rivers, panting, are as lyrics in my ears,
And your jockeyed lightnings clattering are as music of the spheres,
But 't is well that you remember in this climax of the years,
Make no machine of man."

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The discovery of the universality, the immutability and infallible accuracy of natural law and especially its eternal progression, the science of chemistry, of geology and astronomy, voicing as they do the glorious evangel of Evolution, are all grand revelations to man, bringing him a knowledge of his true and real relation to the universe. Emerson says, "In nature all is useful, all is beautiful. It is therefore beautiful because it is alive, moving, reproductive. It is therefore useful because it is symmetrical and fair." Mankind, in harmony with Nature, has a destiny to evolve. No good can accrue to any one by pointing, with pride, to a blue-blooded ancestral pedigree, as if this were all sufficient to meet any demand upon his future. Neither can personal responsibility be evaded upon the plea of unfavorable environments. The idler is met by the inexorable law of Nature's demand for personal activity. If, in reply to this demand, the careless spendthrift of opportunities exclaims, "I am not yet ready to move on," then the grinding wheels of Nature begin their work of atrophy. If the indi-

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vidual will not work and be worked upon, Nature, demanding activity, will through the process of rust, atrophy and decay, gradually dispose of the rough, angular lines of being until he also becomes a spherical co-worker in Nature's purposes.

And yet Nature never deals an unkindly blow. Her operations are but processes of life's expression, by which are evolved integrity, virtue and perfection. For this, the bodies of priceless souls, those dear to humanity's weal, have been burned at the stake, but from their ashes other witnesses have arisen. No cruel rack can subdue, no fire can burn, no abyss of ignorant persecution can swallow up the truth, or destroy its messengers. Truth is vital, eternal — Nature and Truth are one.

The great Beethoven became deaf, and upon an old discordant harpsichord would breathe forth tones which he supposed were matchless harmonies. When Nature undertakes to evolve the melodies of divine love from so many chords which are unresponsive, from others which imperfectly vibrate, we may well question the possible outcome of her efforts. Let

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no one forget that in perfect love is all harmony, and under the manipulation of this divine law all strings upon the dilapidated instruments of human beings will somewhere, sometime be brought into divine and perfect accord of vibration. God's thoughts are not our thoughts. His ways are not our ways. His methods are attuned to the melody and rhythm of divine love, which our efforts so feebly copy.

The untutored savage made his hatchet, or tomahawk, from the stone which was found most nearly resembling the desired shape, or he selected his model from the thin, wedge-shaped lump of iron, and ground it to a sharp edge. The tutored mind, the scientific man, with no thought of shape in his selection, collects pieces of iron and casts the fragments into a heated furnace; when it becomes a liquid stream of fire, he pours it into a mould to be cooled. The savage, observing it, laughs in derision, and exclaims "A pretty tomahawk"! Heated again, it is drawn into the lengthened bar, under the heavy blows of the trip-hammer. Then for many days packed in ashes, salt and charcoal, it must endure the

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heat of the furnace, when it becomes steel. Later, under the hand of the blacksmith, subjected to heat and cold, it is shaped, polished and completed. Place the rude tomahawk of the savage by the side of this finished implement of warfare, and who will deny to the product of science a vast superiority?

Nature takes the native ore of life's possibilities and smelts and casts and draws and bakes and hammers and fashions and tempers as her wisdom directs, and who shall question, in view of results, the beauty of her finished work? The beauty inherent in the archetypal pattern must eventually gain a perfect expression.

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CHAPTER II.

ATTUNEMENT.

THE laws of Nature are eternal and unchanging, and the music of her voice proclaims from every note on the keyboard of her vibrating heart, the love of God. Are our ears attuned to her music, or is this melody — so grand and deep — but a jargon of perplexities and jarring confusions? No note of harmony ever awakens the appreciation of mankind without registering itself somewhere in his nature, in imperishable characters. But his attention must be arrested, his ear attuned less to mundane discords and accidentals, and vibrate more keenly to the music of the spheres.

How lavish of harmony is Nature in her every expression. God sits at His grand organ, whose bellows are filled and operant with the inspiration of His love. He presses the deep bass notes of His vast keyboard, anon the thunders peal and crash,

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bearing a message of purification to the world. The tinkling raindrops descend as His fingers weave the plaintive-toned melody of a minor key, and as He strikes the shrill treble of the upper keys, the curtain of Night is furled, the baton of Dawn is raised to summon a vast feathered orchestra to activity.

What unspeakable pleasure for the harmony-loving soul to break from sleep's enfolding embrace long before she willingly relinquishes her hold, to thus catch the first faint note, divinely sweet, bubbling forth from the throat of some little bird-friend, followed by another and another, until the music, which the wealth of cities can never buy, swells into loftiest peans, carols of richest cadence, blending in sweetest rhythmic chorus into a grand forest symphony. At such an hour, how the soul of man and all that is within him, with every breath, renders praise and thanksgiving for the privilege of living.

Color also has its harmonies as well as those vibrations of the same ether which produce sound. The bird orchestra introduces the chief actor in Nature's drama, the great Magician, the grand old Monarch

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of the day. The mountains and hilltops catch first the golden rays of His universal beneficence. The valleys of the green-carpeted earth surrounding the lakes which mirror this sunrise glory, wait longer to receive the touch of His bright diamond-tipped arrows, but they are not forgotten, and are soon likewise bathed in splendor.

When did ever the faintest hint of a pleasant truth reach a soul to disappoint it, even though its coming seemed long delayed? To all that are living in the valley of discord, not attuned with Nature's harmony, to whom her ways seem hard and unjust, and who, from the heart of their anguish deny to God the attributes of love, mercy and judgment, seeing only the visitations of affliction and chastisement, the darkness in which they are enveloped, let them lift up their eyes to the hills from whence cometh strength, and where light already abides. Look, dear souls, to the heights of your own beings, and the Divine Light, of which the glorious God of day is a feeble symbol, will enkindle anew in your hearts the fire of hope. The growth which any other soul has

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gained, you, in the ripeness of time shall likewise obtain, for ye are gods in embryo. Rich experience stands ready to attest to this fact, that it is far more profitable, as well as congenial, to work in accord with the laws of Nature than to be worked upon by those laws. The first, in the order of universal experience, is to be worked upon, for it is the design of Nature that mankind shall progress. Rapid and healthy progression also demands certain training in preparatory schools of existence. Nature leads, drives, and propels, until all life is brought into companionship with one of the most divine friends to be found upon the highway of life—Aspiration. We journey along in the slow-moving, jostling, jarring cart of circumstances, until the station of Aspiration is reached, when we board her train, and, Love supplying the motive power, we glide along over a straight, ascending road to the terminus of Realization.

Let none be discouraged who are being worked upon, and cast down, overthrown and well-nigh torn asunder, dragged or driven, "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be

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compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us." "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His own good pleasure." It is His pleasure (as it will be your future glory) to remove all angularities from your life, and to shape and fashion you into symmetrical and spherical perfectness, to make you perfect "even as your Father in heaven is perfect." For neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, height nor depth, nothing can ever separate you from the love of God and eventual reflection of His likeness. Men can bask in the beneficent rays of God's love and for a time seem to be unchanged thereby, but this love is destined somewhere, sometime, to warm this lump of apparently dead clay into life.

Henry Ward Beecher once said: "The fact that God's love is boundless and infinite is no evidence that it shall carry benefit to all." On the contrary, it *is* all sufficient, and eventually brings to all humanity an absolute knowledge of its universal power. Nature never hurries. Mankind must emerge

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from that too common belief that the brief span of one earthly experience is sufficient to work out the destiny of Eternity. Beecher also said that, "The fact that God loves, and is so good, should lay no foundation for the plea that men may go on and do as they please." Here the great preacher has most truly spoken, for if such pleas gain acceptance, sooner or later men will discover it to be a foundation built upon the sand, as the upheaval of evolution's advancing waves will destroy it. God, as expressed in Nature, demands and compels progress of every soul. The soul of mankind, by that law, will be compelled to march on until aspiration, true and pure, crowns its advance, when its highest pleasure will be to do only those things which are just and right.

The new-born child would, of itself, be unable to sustain itself in the body for a single day. It came here, however perfect in other respects, altogether incapable and powerless of sustaining its own existence. The tender, watchful care of the mother fully supplies this deficiency, and day by day she feels,

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while enfolding the child in her arms, her own strength, reincarnated in that of her child. This care is never for a day suspended until in the child the power of self-support is realized, and then that love, which has prompted all her attention for the child, goes ever on through all time and eternity. That mother-love was supplied from the inexhaustible fountain of Infinite Love, that love which is everlasting; it endureth forever. God has placed the germ of Himself in everything that lives, and everything has life because God is life, and God dwells innately in His every expression.

Why is man so often, apparently at least, cruelly treated during a mundane experience? Because he has, too often, elected to environ himself with naught but the purely material things of life. When exclusively associated with material interests he becomes weighted and clogged with its gravity, which is a hindrance to spiritual progress. Gross instincts wed us to the earth. Break that bond of desire, divorce yourself from materiality, using it only as a stepping-stone to spiritual benefits. Forget

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the ties that bind you to earth, free yourself from the impulses that drag you downward, feel the truth that you live in eternity to-day as much as the kindred souls who have passed beyond the vail, commune with invisible potencies. Give your thoughts elevation and sublimity, and you will be led away from a thousand perplexities of materiality into a better and happier life.

God's table is ever spread with a most bountiful provision of the delicacies of all seasons. Why sit and sip the cup of sorrow? Through many a sad, yet profitable experience, humanity will learn the lessons contained in the divine book of Nature. In earlier days, human strength was the motive power for accomplishing the purposes of life. This very strength, when exerted on the mental plane, controlled the wild animal as a servant, which measurably lightened the burden of human toil, while in later days, science furnishing such agencies as steam, air and electricity, has made the toil of man almost a pastime. Upon a higher plane of living the burden of human toil must be lightened, the understanding

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of how to co-operate with Nature needs illumination and revealment, the mentality of mankind must be quickened to more perfectly dominate the material, the spirit which man is, gain a fuller expression.

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CHAPTER III.

DESIRE AND WORK.

THE birthright of desire is of priceless value. Inclination, long entertained, converts itself into a faculty. The establishment of a faculty demonstrates the verity of the fact to which it is related. All types of ignorance are conditions from which the aspiring soul wishes to be emancipated. Semi-ignorance still obtains and claims its subjects everywhere. Unpleasant as this truth may be, a consciousness of the fact ever brings with it, as most delightful company, the bright Angel of Hope. The value of desire will be measurably proportionate to the degree of realization of human imperfection and to the persistence of aim in attaining to the true and faultless. "The truth shall make you free." Desire in its highest expression is one with true prayer. It is prayer when strong and fervent.

"With every aspiration, the soul is on its knees."

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A selfish wish is only a base counterfeit of real desire and earnest purpose.

We can conceive of no true prayer unless it is born of a sincere purpose. A man gives his heart to God whenever he desires to be like Him. The precious privilege of prayer should be ignored by none, and its importance cannot be too strongly emphasized. Yet none should be encouraged to pray for the impossible, since God Himself cannot break His own laws. A child would be a long time learning to walk if kept constantly in its cradle and talked to about equilibrium and the centre of gravity. If a person had never seen or tasted an orange, he might be told of its globular shape, its deep yellow tint, and that it belonged to the genus citrus, that the tree upon which it grew was permanently clothed with a glossy green foliage, but the information would convey a far less perfect idea than could be gained in a moment had he been taken to an orange grove and personally seen and tasted the fruit. Similarly, only the practise of prayer can bring appreciation of its value and

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efficacy. To the soul which feels no relation of kinship to its Father, prayer must remain an idle speculation, a mental phenomenon.

Desire, unaccompanied with effort or work, is a foolish waste of mental energy. With earnest desire comes the exhilarating aspiration to work, and as a result of work-prayer many a barren waste has been converted into a garden, the earth has been subjugated and transformed, and therefore becomes a better abode for man. Such efficient desires are doing more to have "Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done" than all the verbal prayers which can ever be offered. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase," says Paul. The importance of watering and planting is not to be subordinated to God's constant willingness to give the increase. Humanity must never neglect its important part of the programme as co-worker with God. Marvellous will be the result of desire for things which are right and true when supplemented with earnest, unselfish effort.

For example, if some member of the family is ill,

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or suffering with some acute physical malady, aid is quickly sought. The best remedial agencies are applied, and if efficacious, health is soon restored. Disease is undesirable, and therefore every precaution against its recurrence will be taken. Perhaps on the physical plane, there are adjacent low lands generating a foul atmosphere, which need draining. If so, it is folly to join issue with any ultra science (?), however popular and prevalent its teachings, and declare that no swamp exists. Impurities may have found a channel of access to the well. If sensible, work is at once begun. This work-prayer will be followed with beneficent results. Health thus gained is retained, as well as maintained for the rest of the family. If there were no hygienic laws, right thought would speedily create them, and enforce a pure environment. It is said that a noted divine, upon hearing doleful comments on the mysterious dispensation of Providence in removing a beautiful little child from rosy, healthful life, by a sudden attack of diphtheria, exclaimed gruffly: "Dispensation of Providence indeed! More likely, rotten potatoes in the cellar"!

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How frequently man yields to fits of impatience, which plunge the thought-life into unnumbered perplexities, depressing sorrow, and unavailing self-reproach! As a legitimate consequence, a desire for an emancipation from this bondage is born in every aspiring soul. How can strength to overcome this weakness be obtained? It is useless to attempt gaining the requisite power except by spiritual exercise, work and practice. If prayer for release is intelligently offered to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, the answer should be expected in the presentation of just those conditions which most thoroughly try the faculties of patience. Victory can come only through the soul's recognition of the beauty and supremacy of patience over its weaker, tantalizing enemy, impatience. Never strive to equalize impulsiveness and passivity. Attempt it, and the regal importance of the mind will be discrowned and find a place in the dust, under the feet of all other powers. Passions must be subjugated to the control of the divinely-illuminated will.

Hobart Berrian, who said "The great mission of

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life is to prepare for death," would have rendered better service to his fellows had he forcibly reminded them that the great mission of life is to live. Work-prayer, wisely directed, in the final analysis will always prove to be constructive, while idleness not only never builds, but disintegrates. Many, too many adherents of creeds are wasting their precious opportunities in singing:

> "Oh for the pearly gates of heaven,
> Oh for the golden floor,"

who would be serving their generation much better, would be adding more happiness to this sphere of time, as well as paving the streets of eternity with glad fruition, if they would work to establish more pearly gates through which love could find ingress to the hearts of men, and make straight and smooth the floors of life now pressed by the feet of the weary and heavy-laden ones of earth.

> "The way to bliss lies not on beds of down,
> And he that has no cross, deserves no crown."

Many there are who are filled with desire and yet never accomplish anything. Yet until some work is

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begun in earnest, an unconscious longing and unrest possesses the soul. From such aimless lives is often derived a sinecure for the physician, where no other illness can be found, save that which breathes in the stagnant pools of idleness. If the importance of his trust were considered, the physician's only prescription for such cases would be: —

Rx.

Honest industry . .	Eight	hours.
Healthful recreation	"	"
Sleep	"	"

SIG.

To be taken daily.

This prescription should be written in plain English, and accompanied by the wholesome advice to always keep the prescription filled. Follow these directions, and the road of life will lead to constant happiness. Follow selfish idleness and, like the vanquished Corsican, the journey of temporal existence will be a melancholy march to some spiritual St. Helena.

A contemplation of the ruins of the Acropolis and the Parthenon finds some consolation in the knowledge that the missiles of valiant warfare helped their

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destruction, and that all which remains of these once magnificent structures is not the product of neglect and the crumbling hand of time. At best these ruins present melancholy aspects. Yet numberless tourists yearly travel thousands of miles to visit and ponder over these dismantled temples of former beauty and grandeur. Nearer at hand may perchance be seen more stupendous and pitiable ruins of that temple which should be kept in hospitable order for the abiding place of the living God.

The Divine Magnet which would draw all mankind nearer and nearer unto Itself has imparted to every soul the impulse of a pure and noble desire, as an efficient handmaiden of the law of progression. It is the key to growth. Desire, enriched with earnest, wisely-directed effort, will assuredly gain abundant entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven.

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CHAPTER IV.

WISDOM AND PURPOSE.

ALL work becomes wearisome and profitless, save that which is wisely directed. However important desire, work and prayer may appear, life's purposes must not be subordinate considerations. The value of results, in association with all efforts, will largely depend upon the directing wisdom. Intelligent mental energy must inspire all muscular effort. Only a few years ago, fifty men were necessary to raise the frame of an ordinary house, a work which six men, with modern appliances, can now more easily perform.

There are two classes of people who rarely meet with any marked degree of success. One class, represented by a large number of followers, has no well-defined purpose in life; the second, while numerically much smaller, and whose purposes are definite enough, although unwisely adjusted to ensure

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the best and most profitable results, add but little more than the first class to the common weal of humanity It is a pleasure and encouragement to recall a third division of society, in which are found people of noble aspirations, whose purposes and actions are directed toward the pathway upon which wisdom sheds her beneficent light.

It is not enough to have definite purposes; they must be wisely directed. Although important, only as steps to much higher considerations, there are purposes that obtain which, to be perfected, require a great waste of nervous energy, bringing the devotee at last to realize the vanity of all earthly standards as a result of a purposeless kind of living, which ends only when despair is buried in the grave of forgetfulness.

Certain proclivities discovered in mankind are frequently attributed to the law of ancestral heredity. Let it ever be borne in mind that true inheritance is of divine origin, and a too-sweeping denunciation of any condition which obtains is to cast a reflection upon the wisdom of the Almighty, and reveals human

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short-sightedness. The inner consciousness is as much the birthright of heredity as certain outward and wrongly called natural propensities. The lazy, purposeless, drifting life is the saddest and hardest to live. The trend of such a life may be an inherited tendency on the mortal plane, but with this transmitted proclivity is the inheritance of a divine spirit of purpose, whose lash is daily felt around the lazy, listless members of inactivity. The importance of yielding to these higher mandates cannot be too strongly urged. The scourge of activity will ever be applied to the back of inertia until a willing obedience is rendered and the healing elixir of "Well done, good and faithful servant," is nobly won.

Nature is very economical and will not tolerate the existence of any waste or useless material. Nature abhors an angle, and she will rub and rack, push and polish every member of her family until each is brought into a spherical beauty, whereby a perfect adjustment to the machinery of the universe is possible. The untamed wilderness by which the primogenital man was surrounded, necessitated his

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bestowing undivided attention upon material affairs. The world is a riper one now, and less attention in this direction is required. The tendency to dig and to delve, to harvest and to hoard is a recognizable taint of ancestral characteristics, frequently over indulged. To many, God's face is reflected only as stamped upon the almighty dollar; with others, He lives solely in the acquisition of purely intellectual knowledge or in the attainment of some selfish ideal; while with some, the flitting butterfly of society is deified. The physical plane is not yet outgrown, the surface of the earth is still inhabited, superficialities absorb human attention, while the spirit shrivels and starves for the sustenance it craves. Is this a wise direction of life's purpose?

Not a small proportion of humanity finds a definiteness of purpose in gratifying an ambition for wealth or position of power, for a leadership in society, and in many other trivial directions, all these desires being far beneath the dignity of an emancipated soul. The demands of modern society, of the exclusive "400," appear to the novice little

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less than cruel. False custom is a monstrous and pitiless dictator of all who live under its dominion. Yet fidelity to the demands of this custom claims the devotion of many of God's children as the highest purpose of life. Follow the lady of fashion for a single day, as various efforts are operative for erasing the pencilings of time. How pitiful the record of the hours devoted to the toilet, how abject a slave to the demands of the flesh is this victim of society! The daily massage, the steaming of the face, rubbing in of unguents and the rubbing off of the same, effacing of incipient wrinkles, often by the painful process of scraping and cupping, the long, painstaking work of the manicure and the pedicure, the artistic labor of the hairdresser, all this wearisome ordeal is nothing short of work, and that a definite purpose prompts it, no one will deny; but what of the wisdom of the purpose?

The man of poverty, in his lonely hut, frequently derives consolation from the scriptural "needle's eye" parable, which may prevent the man of the castle, or lessen his chances of enjoying the occu-

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pancy of a mansion in the great Beyond. The copartnership of weal and woe is found in every manifestation of life. Yet the enjoyment of heaven, here or hereafter, can never be absolutely complete for one until it has been won for all. So long as the present definition of prosperity obtains, the purpose of life will measurably fail to employ means destined to lead to real success. It may be, and doubtless is true that higher and nobler purposes sway humanity to-day than have existed heretofore. This fact, however, is not sufficient and should not obliterate the consciousness of duty in elevating human aims to a still higher standard. An umbrella may protect from the rain, but a well-constructed house will perform the duties of that office much better. God has set up no special barriers in his kingdom against the rich, neither has he thrown wide open all gates of ingress to the poor.

With an unfaltering eye, let present needs be met. One earnest gaze in the right direction often effects a change in the whole life. It is most essential that all minds, from each extreme of life's swing-

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ing pendulum, pause to look within and honestly consider and meditate on the trend of present living. Is it the purpose of the politician, upon his election to an office of trust, to become the true statesman, to keep constantly in view the deepest and best interests of his constituents, or is it his design to gain the office for self-emolument and power, at the sacrifice of confidence reposed in him by those to whom he owes his position? Is the true minister of the gospel, he in whom the sacred charge of making the world better is especially committed, conscientiously performing the duties of his office, or is he to be found giving freedom of rein to ambition's promptings, and for the sake of position catering to the demands of "itching ears"? Is he a leader of the people, or is he led by them?

Is the physician true to the highest duties of his office? Is it his constant care to so teach others the laws of health and of right thought that no recognition of disease would be necessary, or does his cruel, illegitimate and barbaric practice of vivisection encourage in him a desire for unnecessary

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surgical operations, or for professional experiments, until the patient is left a mere wreck of a human being, the remnant of a body almost too slight for purposes of identification? Is he endeavoring to throw open to the world every avenue of health? Is he sinking self-considerations in humane effort to elevate his own calling by destroying all possibility of disease, or is he straining every nerve to foister upon the people such unjust laws as will make of his profession a sinecure, and an eternal birthright, by virtue of which all spiritual illumination in this connection, all divinely prepared and appointed healing shall be relegated to oblivion?

Are religionists really doing to others as they would that others should do unto them, or are the habiliments of religion being used for well defined and yet unjust purposes? Is the monopolist an unselfish man? Is it his purpose to control commercial enterprises for the benefit of the masses? Is it the object of fashionable society to perfect a broader culture, or is its highest purpose to intrench itself within the parapets of seclusiveness? Is the sanctity

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of the marriage institution the purpose of marriage, or is it too often a mere commercial enterprise? Are the unfortunate, the poor and needy, receiving due and just consideration from wealth? Is the laborer toiling simply for his pay, measuring every effort by the dollar it brings, or is his work one of love and duty? Is each worker on every plane trying to bring more happiness to the world than is now found therein? What is the purpose which prompts the activities of life? "Wisdom is more precious than rubies, and all things that can be desired are not to be compared unto her." With all thy getting, oh children of earth, get understanding!

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CHAPTER V.

THOUGHT.

"Our thoughts are odors, and we cannot seal them
So close with actions, but they will creep out;
And delicately-fashioned souls will feel them,
And know them sweet, or vile, beyond a doubt."

THOUGHT is the reservoir from which certain purposes flow, while others emanate from feeling, from deeper wells of intuitive consciousness, and for these, thought is the actor and agent of expression. But a true and wise purpose is often diverted from its achievement by adverse, or trivial thought-currents, with which connection is inadvertently made. Thought is not purely automatic. It is excited by everything seen, and the character of the thing observed will determine the nature of the thought. It is therefore desirable to choose an environment which is harmonious, beautiful and wholesome, and to tolerate, only when prevention is

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impossible, the things which are unclean, angular and repulsive.

It is affirmed that thoughts are things. The assertion is one that is open to controversy. But that all things in material expression are the product of thought, none will logically deny; and that such expressions may undergo radical changes as a result of thought, is doubtless true. Thoughts are things to one who comprehends their reality; they are not things to any one else. Human intellect reasons from the abstract to the concrete. In the world of spirit, the concrete is the reality. There, thoughts indeed are things. They have only recently come to be so considered among men, as humanity grows nearer its spiritual self-hood, and therefore gains recognition of the true and the real. To many thinkers, thoughts remain forces rather than things, and this may be a wiser, universal designation in the present development of the race.

That crowning glory of our nation — the Congressional Library at Washington — resplendent in the beauty of its symmetrical architecture, rich and

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ornate in every detail from basement to dome, its wealth of decoration, its convenience and adaptability to the purpose for which it was designed, stands as a noble monument of the materialization of artistic thought.

Ah, what a piece of work is man! How like a god in his possibilities, his skill, his marvellous achievements! And thought is the lever with which he lifts the world to his ideal of beauty and service.

And thought ever enriches the thinker. By the beautiful law of reciprocity, thought correspondingly effects for weal or woe the life of every thinker, making his character more angular or spherical as his mental vibrations are crude or refined. His thought-life has created the sciences of phrenology, physiognomy and palmistry, now held in such high esteem, which in their turn hold a life record as accurate as the book of recording angel.

All truth is important, but the relative value of different phases of truth are determined by their use in application. "Know thyself," for by such knowledge all other selves are in greater degree understood.

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The science of physiognomy is deserving of more attention than at present it receives. A thorough knowledge of this science converts the furrows and pencilings of time seen upon the face into a veritable soul biography. It is not desirable for an elderly face to be without wrinkles. Note the grand countenances of Gladstone, of Longfellow, or of Wendell Phillips, so deeply furrowed, not with the lines of worry and care, but chiselled by the noble thought which has been theirs. Be not ashamed of wrinkles, unless they are of the wrong kind. Strong thought leaves an indelible impress, in loving characters, of the thinker's character. All minds are architects of character, and thought-activity is daily constructing a temple for the indwelling of the spirit. Then let all thought-life be directed and focused upon that which is good. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

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The law of reflex action is inexorable, and thinking of that which is good, recognizing only the good in everybody and everything will find correspondence with good, will create it in the heart of the thinker, while baleful thoughts, through the same law, will cancel every obligation with coin from its own spurious mint. The body is unquestionably moulded by thought. An erect pose of the body, an open, frank expression of the countenance, and the honest eye reveals habits of righteous thinking, as also does distortion, ugliness, and the shifting glance disclose the consequence of evil thought.

Longevity of physical life, good health, as well as refined and classical features, owe their origin to proper thought. Through the right kind of thinking an irregular face may become an object of universal admiration, beautiful in every expression. The best lotion for the complexion is pure thoughts, constantly expressed. Character can be determined by a person's gait, and is often most perfectly portrayed in the laugh. When in that most sacred place, the dining-room, the character of the conversation, which

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is but an outward expression of thought, cannot be too carefully guarded. No angry thought should ever enter here, whether unuttered, or expressed. Not only is material food here consumed, but thought chemicals inhere in all food chemicals, and through the process of digestion and assimilation compose the chemistry of the body.

A healthy body is a natural companion of a lofty spirit. None will deny that the spirit of man acts upon the body, and it is clearly true that that which can be acted upon is in turn capable of reacting. Let every particle of food be well seasoned with jolly, happy laughter, and thoroughly mixed with the best and purest thoughts. Think strength, not weakness; growth, not decay; fortune, not misfortune. Contemplate health, beauty and symmetry, not disease, ugliness and angularity, for "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Think not of crime nor of criminals. It is a public disgrace that the secular press finds, or thinks it finds, it necessary to publish, with such vivid, harrowing descriptions, the appalling wickedness of

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the day. They thus send forth a poisonous influence into the thought-world whose extent none can compute. Capital punishment is only legalized murder, and every time a criminal is executed the thought-world is deluged with newspaper descriptions of the event, thereby gratifying a morbid and polluted taste. By ceasing to engage in the business of murder itself, the State would make its own thought-world purer, and inspire thoughts of kindness and not revenge, of reformation and not punishment. The murderer is the product of cramped and unholy thought, and the gallows is but a ghastly relic of barbaric thinking. The cause, of which the murderer is an effect, was the thought of ignorance, the world's chief sin. Change the nature of the thought, and you remove the cause, and as a logical consequence the murderer emerges from his barbaric, uncivilized condition and begins to thread the devious path of progress.

Thought is a builder of ladders, upon the rungs of which we ascend to the heights of divine realization or descend to degradation, darkness and despair.

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The true end of living is to be happy and to make others happy. Pleasure should not be confounded with happiness or remain the goal of one's ambition, for simple pleasure is often associated with selfish gratification and frequently encourages only the baser senses. Pleasure may be enjoyed without gaining happiness, but when happiness is secured, pleasure is constant.

In order to achieve all possible happiness, perfect confidence in the future, the future of this world as well as the next, must be fully maintained. Perfect confidence in the future is always conducive to passivity and serenity in the present. Anticipated happiness reflects its light all along the pathway to realization. Confidence in the future makes such anticipation possible. The thought of the future should be one continual serene hope, since only Omnipotent Good reigns.

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CHAPTER VI.

SELF-ASSERTION.

TO assert one's self may be prolific of more or less friction, nevertheless, when this proves true, it only demonstrates that there still remain some angularities of character to be softened and transformed through such friction. Self-assertion is often defined as being nothing more than blind self-conceit, or an indiscriminate impulse. Even were this the highest conception of self-dominance, it is still best to assert the same. The experience thus gained will doubtless be unpleasant, but the result of the experience will develop a calm judgment and a superior consciousness of moral faculties. The process will prove the cleansing fire of the gold cast in the furnace. Truth is often impotent, good lacks sovereign power, and villany therefore triumphs, from the want of self-reliance and self-consciousness. When self-assertion is maintained, its possessor is bound to suffer at first,

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but will finally be freed from the undesirable companionship of conceit, and gain the fellowship of a true, strong and beautiful self-reliance. The effervescence and perturbation of vanity will yield to consistency and a democracy of interest in all mankind.

It is not incompatible with modesty for a person to feel that he is, in certain ways, superior to others, that for a certain mission peculiar gifts have been vouchsafed him. "Is it best to do good by stealth, and blush to find it shame"? Untamed animalism is bold conceit, a turbid stream. Spirituality is the clear-flowing river of calm, serene repose, in the consciousness of a true and higher self-hood. The lover of truth is not the master of the liar, but truth is the master of all falsity and of that vanity which temporarily bestows success upon its servants, but is a false height, from which recession is necessary to gain a true spiritual elevation.

A liberal seasoning of self-reliance is frankly admitted to be of incalculable value to the leader in public affairs. If this be true, then this quality more

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developed in the man of private life would release him from the frequently unjust dominion of the former. Self-confidence has been suppressed by many means until, as a result, some natures of a morbid humility consider themselves to be worthless, and have surrendered to despair. The law of the State apprehends the morally depraved, keeps them long enough to stifle aspiration and self-reliance, subjects them to an association which breeds more depravity, and then releases its victim to vitiate the channels of public thought.

When will the State be governed by laws patterned more closely after the divine law of Nature? Drastic treatment should have no other view, or object, than reformation. It is pre-eminently the duty of all who are emancipated from the thraldom of depraved inclinations to educate the unfortunate victim of untoward circumstances and generate within him the idea that he is one of God's children, that he has a divine selfhood to unfold and cultivate. By such a process those lives already good are made better; by neglecting this obligation, and seeking to reform by punishment, the desired end is not attained.

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There can be found no department of life where self-assertion will not prove of much benefit. It might be argued that such advantage depends upon what kind of a self-hood is to be asserted. There is only one true self-hood which is one with the Supreme Self, "the only Self of all creatures." In the final analysis it will be found that the true self of every one is that priceless gem of God-hood-ness which through Nature's process and divine intention is destined to an immortality, glorious and perfect as the pristine Eternal Life. If any soul, because of a limited aspiration, is environed by a clutter-pile which is disagreeable to the more sensitive observer, it is plainly the duty of the more enlightened nature to help the struggling one to clear away the rubbish of unrighteous thought and puerile living, thereby giving the soul a chance to unfold and progress. Lack of charity toward the faults of others portrays a fault in ourselves. The real self often is recognized, only after repeated triumphs over the baser and lower attachments which, like barnacles, have become fastened upon the ego.

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It is difficult, if not impossible, to give proper importance to our regal powers, until the true relation of self to God is clearly recognized. The spirit of man is the same in quality as the Spirit of God. Man is not infinite, because his spirit is not infinite in quantity, but every man is a spirit, and in that spirit abideth the "I Am" of all causation. A recognition of this truth is the solvent of all doubts and fears, and leads to a serene confidence in an inner ability to cope with all the vicissitudes of life. A possession of this recognition at once destroys all disease, since Divinity can only express immaculate health, makes of every trial a stepping-stone to happiness, annuls the idea of death as a calamity, and relates it to our thought as an orderly arranged and desirable experience in life.

A recognition of this spiritual power of self-hood perfects a dominancy which enables all to look upon the catalogue of evil as a volume filled only with unrealities. The assertion of true self-hood unfolds a thorough and faithful consideration of the problems of life, by gaining at-one-ment with the Infinite

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design. It trusts no longer, without question, the teachings and conclusions of others. Too long has it been taught, and confidently accepted, that man is totally depraved and that he needs to be regenerated.

It is not necessary to consider the value of such teachings as have obtained in the past, for with our present enlightenment we know that every soul is born of God, and is as pure as God himself is pure. The baser senses of mankind are not regenerated and utilized as vehicles of expression on a higher plane of sense perception; they are outgrown and left behind, as the soul climbs upward to grasp and wield more spiritual faculties and powers. Evolution proclaims this a truth, and nineteenth-century-common-sense lends thereto its unqualified endorsement. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."

There would be more wisdom in clothing a monitor with pewter armor, than a soul with the sensualities of the fleshly senses. "Ye must be born again," day by day, yea, the soul must daily gain a new birth in a better understanding of its own powers.

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The true self, with its importance asserted, will be led into the rightful province of activity, the realm of spirit, the only reality, the supreme power. Doubtless the reason for teaching the total depravity of man, in the past, was due to the fact that the teacher had failed to gain recognition of the real self, being blinded to it by external manifestations of undeveloped and primal states.

"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them * * * who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." Whatever may be the circumstances and conditions which obtain in the world of excarnate spirits, here in this sphere different states of consciousness are observed in life's multitudinous expressions. The present hour finds progressive souls in an attitude of conscious perception, entirely different from that of yesterday. A man is master of mathematics to-day, who only a few years ago was ignorant of the science. Does his former ignorance bear any relation to his present knowledge? Did he

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convert his former ignorance of the science into his present attainments? On the contrary, he destroyed ignorance and overcame it by asserting his divine right to knowledge. The man who has grown into a spiritual understanding of spiritual things, does not look upon his glorious acquisition as being related to his former materiality, but as being quite foreign to it. His spiritual attitude is the result of growth in consciousness of his real self-hood and the assertion of his divine birthright.

Each soul, independent of his environments, is the equal of any other soul. If those possessed of more favorable light and knowledge are really desirous of beholding a society that is strong and pure, expressive of a large manhood and womanhood, they will labor for the development of purity and the unfoldment of the divine possibilities to be found in every individual.

Present methods of suppressing vice often prove to be but incubators for the production of its own legitimate offspring. The life which finds it impossible to assert itself either from lack of disposition or

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from hindrance from extraneous circumstances, possesses a legitimate claim to help from those who wield a greater power. The assertion of true selfhood is but an expression of the God within. The power to accomplish is only limited by a wisdom of how to perform. Wisdom is only gained through experience. An intelligent experience is only possible by and through assertion of the higher self, which leads at length to that goal of all striving — selflessness — the polar opposite of human selfishness, too often the highest expression of personal dominance. But the selfish man is learning his strength, building up his individuality. Despise him not. The ladder by which he climbs to spiritual heights must rest upon materiality. We "rise on the stepping-stones of our dead selves" to conscious realization of the Supreme Self.

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CHAPTER VII.

PERCEPTION AND REFLECTION.

THROUGH timely reflection many of the rough and angular features of external life are avoided, and natural tendencies are rounded and modified. As soon as the grand possibilities of life are conceived, habits of meditation and reflection should be formed, that only the wisest and best paths be pursued. Life is too often a careless, aimless drifting, uninspired by any masterful purpose. A careful phrenological examination of a large number of persons would reveal the fact that the reflective faculties are sadly deficient. The cause of this seems easily traceable to the lack of activity in this department of thought.

The almost savage encounter for material gain in the warfare of the world has sharpened and intensified the perceptive faculties upon the external plane. Pre-natal tendencies have stamped every

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child of earth with a natural endowment in this direction. The rigorous hardships of primal civilization, the penury, want and misery which obtained, directed the reasoning faculties of generations then unborn into the channel of material activity. This condition now exists, and is the legitimate sequence to a conspiring cause found in primal states. The constant exercise of this faculty of perception upon the lower plane has prepared it for a keener appreciation of the higher spiritual life, if its activity can thus be conserved.

Some of the failures of life are doubtless due to a lack of power to perceive opportunities, but more are due to a lack of proper reflection which leads to a mature judgment of how to properly appropriate such opportunities. Mankind is endowed with many faculties which are practically dormant, and in some instances the highest and best powers are found in a very inactive condition. In an attempt to perform the duties of life well, familiarity with all the implements of work is an absolute necessity.

However keen and active perception may become,

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the cultivation of the reflective faculties must greatly enhance its value. It is not advisable to make a specialty of developing one faculty to the neglect of another, notwithstanding this is a most common method of procedure. The framework of human estates will be found, as a result, to be out of proportion, deficient in architectural beauty and symmetry.

To properly cultivate and train every faculty and develop each upon a plane of perfect unison with every other is the pattern set by the great Architect of the Universe. Such a process produces not the cubical, angular, one-sided being, but the man of spherical harmony.

Everybody is cognizant of ever-recurring phenomena in nature, but their significance is only appreciated by the thoughtful observer. The presentation of a phenomenon is an invitation from God, to all of His children, to investigate it, to reflect upon it, and to become familiar with the truth which it reveals. The ways of God may have seemed "past finding out," but if this be true, it has not

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been due to His unwillingness to reveal Himself to the limit of human receptivity, but to the stupidity and ignorance of His children. Humanity must learn its own lessons. No one can accept a truth for another. The constant presentation of phenomena is a universal invitation from the Schoolmaster of all mankind to comprehend His laws. God has ever revealed Himself, and is constantly unfolding more and more of Truth to all earnest students. If God's laws are to be known, they are to be studied, and habits of deep reflection will eventually reveal the purposes of all phenomena.

Who has not seen an untrained team in its attempt to draw a heavy load? The effort is always spasmodic and jerky, while the draught horses move the same load with apparent ease and composure. Perception, without reflection, is a harness in which mankind yanks and twists and wastes his vital energy in an effort to move the burdens of life, while reflection designs and solves all problems of difficulty, converts every load into a stepping-stone on which to mount higher, and transforms discouragement into

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a never-failing resource of courage and conscious power.

Reflection leads to the goal of contentment; not to a satisfaction necessarily with present attainments, but to a consciousness of an inherent ability to make real the idealities of life. By the use of this faculty, interior potentialities are realized. One should always be able to find self a delightful companion, thus escaping that too common frailty of desiring to "kill time," because of *ennui* and unrest. Repose, which is the key to spiritual power, the greatest need to-day of the race or the individual, can only be gained through self-poise and persistent habits of calm, introspective reflection.

Repose is sure to make of self a delightful friend, who will always prove entertaining and instructive, filling up the time so profitably that every moment is considered of precious worth. Reflection is the *open sesame* to companionship, not only with self, but with all people and things. It attracts friends from all forms of life. It makes of the past a delightful reminiscence, and of future experiences, pleasant

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anticipations. It creates an ideal world where beauty reigns supreme, where color is beheld unceasingly waving her palms of splendor, where the rattling thunder, the raindrops upon the roof, the softly falling crystals of snow, are all chords of a celestial chorus; while laughter and tears, shadows and sunshine are revealed in this light, as an orderly language of Nature.

Whether man considers himself as a member of a homogeneous or hetrogeneous community, he is a part of society, and is therefore a scion, dependent for his growth upon the fructification of the whole tree. Success in life depends largely upon the harmonious adjustment of one member of society to all other members. Repose is not compatible with angry perturbations. Anger never generates amiability. If success on any plane is desired, affability to others must be cultivated. Study the art of repose, for repose develops harmony, and good nature is an indispensable agency to success. Repose is likewise the helpmate in obtaining material advantages, but success means far more than mere money-getting,

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yet upon whatever path to prosperity man yields himself as devotee, the attitude of self-contained repose will be found of incalculable value.

However important or far-reaching become the active relations of one's life, they will be found to be the result of tact, push and principle, breathed into each little act of life's opportunities. The habit of reflecting carefully is gained just as any other habit is made; namely, by small beginnings. As a process of training in this school, it will be found most profitable to carefully reflect before giving answer to even the most trivial questions. If a question is worthy of an answer, the questioner can afford to wait for a reply resultant upon mature reflection. If care is given to the small considerations of life, the larger and more important affairs will certainly not be neglected, but receive that character of thought which mature judgment alone can give.

The school-boy's water-wheel which he has constructed out of a cross stick, into which he has inserted a few paddles, is to him just as important as the giant wheel which is employed to propel the

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machinery of a great factory. Observe that little boy as he stands there by the side of his production, with his pantaloons rolled up to his not over-clean knees, watching his water-wheel go spinning around under the gentle touch of the silvery cascade, already, by his small experiment, cultivating his reflective faculties. Give that little fellow a chance, and to the car of progress he will harness new steeds of power, which will drive the world onward at a diviner speed. That boy standing in the playground, delivering a harangue to his fellows, may be making an important preparation for a power in oratory which, in subsequent life, shall stir the waiting souls of humanity to a comprehension of higher revealments of truth.

There can be no duty of life too menial to receive the stamp of God's approval. Instead of disturbing the boy and seeking to thwart his ambition, because he is engaged in what seems an affair of trivial importance, encouragement should be given him to perform well the little duties of his immature experience. An intelligent observation and cultivation of latent powers, or tendencies, will yield to the next generation a better manhood and womanhood.

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Reflection will give power of discrimination and save the world from many a blunder. Reflection will help every man to rightly measure his own ability, and thereby save him from much waste of energy devoted to departments of life's activity to which he is improperly adjusted. Many farms are but a barren wilderness to-day, because of so many bad interpreters of Blackstone, so many ranting preachers, so many unsuccessful physicians, who in their chosen professions have wasted their time and energy to the neglect of the deserted farm. On the other hand, many a wilderness has been made to "bloom and blossom as the rose," as the result of the uncongenial toil and sweat of the man who would have been an ornament to the bar, to the pulpit, or any other profession. Proper adjustment of relations brings a harmony to life. Reflection will lead to the proper correspondence of all relations, will annul personal ambition, and prepare each soul now expressing its purpose on earth, to fill just the niche for which it was intended, thus gaining the conquest and upliftment that it craves.

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CHAPTER VIII.

SERVICE.

"And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

THERE can be but one basic evolutionary law; there is but one road that leads to soul freedom. It would be an impossible task to direct any conduct toward the amelioration of the human family without each self-hood becoming a co-partner in its benefits. The race rises, or falls, as a unit.

To do for others as you would be done by means far more than the performance of certain activities of life. It comprehends all mental and spiritual relations to your fellowmen. Bestowing charity where it is needed is certainly commendable, but the thought which accompanies the gift should be the richest gift of all. To give, simply to be freed from some troublesome mendicant, may be but a paltry price paid for relief from an annoyance. The gift

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may answer certain demands of the unfortunate, but the thought is poison, and no one is nearer to its infectious potency than he who generates it.

It is possible for a most selfish individual to pose as the embodiment of generosity and unselfishness. The donor of magnificent gifts is not always a philanthropist. There has lived many a benefactor with a soul stirred to deeds of kindness, who has never bestowed anything of value upon one needy brother without also helping to symmetrize and make more beautiful the thought of the world, greatly adding to the riches of the great Commonwealth. It is equally true that charitable institutions have been endowed, colleges have been built and sustained, public libraries have been equipped with all the best literature of the ages, while such institutions have been only memorials of the misanthropist.

To be favored with an opportunity to advance and improve the material and mental condition of one's fellowmen, and then to perform such act with unworthy sentiments or with a view of making a display for

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selfish aggrandizement, is a malefeasance of that high office and power which material wealth has given. A gift, in order to represent the greatest possible value, must include with it the life of the donor.

> "Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
> Himself, his hungry neighbor, and Me."

The man who is a servant to the people, who gives his life, without reservation, for the good of others, who uses his resources, without stint, to meet the physical, spiritual, and mental wants of the community is, though a servant, clothed in the regal splendor of honorable manhood.

Has not the soul of man sometimes been veiled in darkness and become "penny-poor" in its "pound-plenty" process of giving? It is not best to place too high an estimate upon things purely material unless in their use, divine purposes are answered. Too great significance cannot be attached to the spirit and thought given to the world's service.

No thought of placing the beneficiary under obligations for services rendered or under allegiance

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to any belief of a social, political, or religious creed, or even a demand for the reciprocity of friendship, should accompany any favor bestowed. There should be a complete surrender of the best there is in self, with the supreme desire to make all others happier thereby, and to endow each heart with the motive power of love that will enable them to join their chariot of life to the purposes of the Almighty.

Through the process of giving one's self as a willing sacrifice upon the altar of human need, thought co-operation is established, and by conjunctive thought, all selves are kept more closely in touch with the Supreme Self. Like the swinging of the pendulum of the clock which divides time into seconds, has the great pendulum of human thought been separating the interests of mankind into individual units, but now signs are apparent upon the horizon of human advancement, of an advent of tremendous impulse for co-operative thought and action.

A deeper devotion for the welfare of all is needed

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and a rendering of the same to the world. This altruistic spirit is in conformity with the operation of that law, by and through which, divine power is derived. To work in conformity therewith, infuses warmth and cheer into all environments, gives to self, as to all others, a greater peace and joy, as well as physical power and vigor. Through a true selfless benevolence, association is gained with realities of eternal significance.

Beneath the rough exterior of humanity exists far more beautiful qualities than could possibly be determined from a superficial view of their expression. Benevolence, true Christian charity, good-will, philanthrophy and unselfishness are at the centre of all mankind, innately, because at the heart, or centre, is God, from whom are derived all vitalizing powers, all of beauty, and the germ of every divine attribute.

Sometimes man is unconsciously a more faithful servant to his neighbors' needs than he realizes. Even an unconscious practise of virtue is attended with good results, not only to the world at large but also to him who unwittingly lives such moral life. It

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is often a pathway to a realization of virtue's value, a means of attaining a conscious relationship with divine similitude. A man does not study medicine because he expects to be always suffering with colic himself, but because he knows of the prevalence of physical ills, and therefore that there will be a demand for his services. No one learns how to spin cotton because he means to fill large storehouses with yarn, but because he knows that this product is a general necessity. It is always the general service which calls for and determines all individual proficiency.

At the portals of each individual life is inscribed the consciousness that all are brethren; that personal pleasure and gratification are not the purposes of living; that every man's duties lie just where the needs of his fellowmen most loudly call; that the highest good is reaped in pursuing a universal service to the great brotherhood of humanity, thus fulfilling the design of Infinite Love. This humanitarian spirit has been thus nobly expressed by Rev. John Newton: "I see in this world two heaps—

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one of human happiness and one of misery. Now, if I can take the smallest bit from the second heap and add to the first, I carry a point. If, as I go home, a child has dropped a halfpenny, and if, by giving it another, I can wipe away its tears, I feel that I have done something. I should be glad, indeed, to do great things, but I will not neglect such little ones as these."

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and the first-fruits of all thine increase, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses burst out with new wine." A mere bestowal of material wealth, having some ulterior purpose back of such action, will seldom be rewarded according to scriptural promise. If it were, selfishness, ere this, would have discovered in it a means of profitable investment. The spirit and manner of giving, of whatever name or nature, should "honor" the God within, and copy divine methods. A man may be strictly honest toward others, in the commercial world, and at the same time lack the spirit of real honesty and benevolence. A commercially honest man who benefits society by his example

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of integrity, may offset this good influence by his personal selfishness.

It has been said concerning the false standard of the selfish man, that "To maintain an extensive establishment, to carry high before the world, to settle his children respectably in life, to maintain a system of costly self-indulgence, — these are the objects that swallow up all his gains, and keep him in a constant fever and covetousness at the sight of others' prosperity, rendering him loth to part with a fraction of his property for benevolent purposes, and making him feel as if every farthing of his money so employed were a diversion of that farthing from the great ends of life. New channels of benevolence may open around him in all directions, but, as far as he is concerned, those channels must remain dry; for, like the sand of the desert, he absorbs all the bounty which heaven rains on him, and still craves for more." Such a life is not respectable, because of its selfishness, and it is too narrow to be successful.

No one should limit his thoughts to money alone, when practising benevolence. Gold is the least of

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gifts. It is the spirit of true self-hood-ness, not self-ness, the God within, which prompts to benevolent acts, kindness and generosity. "Benevolence, in the broadest sense, is not only essential to a decent character, but is essential to a sane mind and a sound heart." That soul has gained emancipation from the bondage of selfishness who has lived such a life as to be able, when the curtain is falling upon all scenes of human activity, to say conscientiously, with Bonar:

"Up, and away, like the colors of sunset,
That sweeten the twilight as darkness comes on;
So be my life, — a thing felt, but not noticed,
Only remembered by what I have done.

"Not myself, but the truth that in life I have spoken,
Not myself, but the seed that in life I have sown,
Shall pass on to ages — all about me forgotten,
Save the truths I have spoken, the good I have done.

"So let my living be, so be my dying,
So let my name lie unblazoned, unknown;
Unpraised and unmissed, I shall still be remembered,
Yes, but remembered by what I have done."

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CHAPTER IX.

INHERENT POWER.

SO completely did Christ feel the indwelling power of God that he could say, "All power is given unto me, both in heaven and in earth." Supreme realization! Centuries of wrong thought-suggestion, (it can hardly be called thinking, for a few have done all the thinking for the many), has led mankind to look upon itself as a weak, impotent "worm of the dust," and, as a consequence, its birthright of power has dwindled into a reflection of that mistaken thought-picture.

In whatever condition man has found himself, he has sought consolation from the thought that Divine Providence so ordered it. However angular or discordant life seemed, some satisfaction has been gained in the assurance that "God knoweth best." Recent years have wrought wonderful changes in this respect, and now, more than ever before, man

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refuses to submit to unripe conditions, but is compelling all circumstances to surrender their sovereignty to his will, realizing as he does that the human will, in accordance with the Divine Will, is lord of conditions, the creator of circumstances rather than their servile creature.

The inherent power of man has only in a few isolated cases been realized. All power was Christ's because of his recognition of his true relation to God, because of his conscious at-one-ment, which enabled him to declare "I and my Father are one." Is it possible for any man to likewise say, "All power is given unto me"? Of a truth it may be said by all. Does not all power dwell in God, and does not God dwell in each of His children? But a realization of His power is necessary before it can be used. The elephant is led about with a hook and kept in complete subjection to man, whose physical strength is less than a hundredth part of his own, simply because of his imperfect comprehension of his own power. Man also fashions his life in puerile grooves, limits his own grasp of power because of his human separateness from Omnipotence.

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Science reveals that every chemical property found in the earth and atmosphere are also to be found in man. What latent forces have been discovered in these latent elements! Steam and electricity (and that new motive power, which is destined to work a mechanical revolution, liquid air, to the perfect development of which Mr. Chas. E. Tripler is devoting his life) have been brought to pay tribute to man's ingenuity, revealing a giant in intellectual resources of power. Where is the prophet bold enough to predict what fifty years more will unfold? In all these discoveries, the power of God innate in man is displayed. And other powers are at man's command just as soon as he is competent to manage them, and sufficiently in earnest to discover them.

God's life throbs in the puffing steam as it hurls the train of movable palaces, temporarily inhabited by his children, across a continent whose shores are tied together with a ribbon of steel. Man's victory over space and approach to Omnipresence is felt in the electric spark, which has become an intelligent carrier for transmitting thought across continents, or,

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through the deep ocean's bed to weave a girdle around the earth.

Aristotle said, "One must not obey those who bid us 'think humbly as being mortal men,'" nay, rather, we should indulge immortal longings, and strive to gain a full unfoldment of that divine possibility within us which, though now dwarfed and stunted, is throbbing with that unexpressed potency, which is indeed each man's proper self. By living nearer an immortal standard our true individuality will be developed, the image and likeness of the divine pattern become a clearer reflection.

Disease, that affliction of the human family, that nightmare and illusion of the race, which is purely the product of very bad habits of thinking, as associated with self, or hereditary tendencies, may be most completely relegated to oblivion, by a complete cognition of this inherent power, which is man's birthright. The God within is all sufficient for every human need, physical or spiritual. The mind may recognize the existence of matter, on the plane of expression, but is in no sense its servant, and save

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when fettered by false education, is always the master of its physical kingdom. There are other diseases than those of the body, whose cure likewise lies within man's province.

Moral impotency exists, where the passions for a time appear as iron-handed dictators. In business, political, and professional life, conscience is squared by a false standard of health or wholesomeness. Many men in the various marts of trade or society, have so long indulged in conscience opiates, that they are really scoundrels without knowing it.

The standard of moral healthfulness in the nation will be determined largely by that criterion of a righteous principle to which a strict allegiance is given. There can be but one true standard of justice and purity, and that is the matrix of the Divine within.

Small good would be accomplished by saying to this class of diseased people, "You should forsake your present ways of living." If a man were deaf, it would be an aggravation to inform him that he "ought to hear," and it would be no more advisable to thus treat any defect of character.

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The parent who constantly impresses upon the child its shortcomings is unwittingly sowing seeds of error which only divine power can save from their legitimate fruit in the debasement of that once fair image of God, until, as a sequel, it is clothed in the stripes of the convict.

External expressions may be angular and uncouth, but the divine ideal is always symmetrical and beautiful. It is always the most precious gem, the jewel of greatest worth, which receives the most care in polishing and burnishing and that best repays the labor bestowed upon it. The joiner draws his chalk-line along the rough-skinned giant of the forest, with no thought of its external encasement, and hews to the line, taking no note of the chips wasted in his efforts, his chief object being to relieve the timber within from its external husk and make of it a well-proportioned member of the structure he is rearing. It is thus that character should be builded, according to the divine model within the soul.

Useless would be the attempt to persuade a people that our potatoes were excellent food by offering

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them only the outer skin. So will man find difficulty at every step, in any effort which he may make to convince his fellowmen of his own value, by offering them simply the external personality. He must unfold the divine element within and then project it into the world.

Every soul must work out its own salvation, must awaken to its need through the quickening of the germ within, through the hunger and thirst of the unsatisfied soul which craves divine communion, the crowning of its true self-hood with the regal power of Infinity. How often the emergency of sudden need has developed great souls to be leaders of the people in a manner to surprise even the chief actors themselves, the powers of oratory, poetry or generalship, lying latent within, being hitherto unsuspected.

> "Thou dost not dream what forces lie in thee,
> Vast and unfathomed as the grandest sea."

All improvements in self will be the result of a cognition of inherent capabilities, and also such emanations will, like an arrow of golden light, illumine the pathway of all humanity.

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> **" How far that little candle sheds its beams,**
> **So shines a good deed in this naughty world."**

Good deeds are the legitimate results of a recognition of an ability to perform them, while such an ability generates a disposition towards beneficent action. Has not mankind an inherent power to always do good, since his innate capacity is like unto God's? God is incapable of doing evil, therefore, a recognition of the God power which dwelleth in every soul gives a potency in quality, if not in magnitude, like unto the perfection of the great Over-Soul, who is always good and in whose goodness is "no variableness nor shadow of turning."

When related to its proper sphere, this inherent power gives freedom from all jarring, all evil thought, and that fearful curse — Fear. It brings vigor and life to things inert and dead, and with its refreshing waters clothes the barren fields of human experience with a verdure of continual opportunities, nobly improved. Talents that are buried or neglected are by its force exhumed and placed at a profitable usury, so that unto him who hath shall be given,

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more and more abundantly, while the Infinite works in and through us, His will and pleasure.

The many ills common to all life can be averted or grandly borne only by the exercise of this divine, inherent power. This innate, Godlike quality always images the pure and the good, while in turn the image, through reflex action, helps to make the man. Old age is seldom a welcome guest, and yet humanity is persistently, though unconsciously, inviting it. Like an electric button, the enunciator of old age is expectantly pressed more firmly with the advance of years. Nothing so hastens decrepitude as thinking of worn-out conditions. Press the button of vigorous and healthy thought and, like an electric light, these elements will enter the darkened regions of weariness and decrepitude. Nothing really grows old but the human consciousness, since on the psychological plane the body is daily and hourly renewed, and we live our real life in a realm where Time is not.

With this inherent power as a conscious possession, the beauty of all nature renders to the soul a

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continual feast and blessing, and when by the seaside, the pebbles will sing and the waves will chant God's glories. The mountains will inspire and uplift, the firmament will show forth His handiwork: the silence of the night will be vocal with sweet music: the stars will appear like the eyes of God's tenderness, and the beauty of every human soul in any guise will be seen, since the beauty of the Lord our God rests upon us all.

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CHAPTER X.

LIFE'S EXPRESSION.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

GOD presents problems for mankind to solve, but keeps no guard of secrecy over any truth. The treasures of wisdom are not locked within His breast. All unwise secrecy, which so often governs human action, is of close affinity to selfishness or fear, which are not divine attributes and should be outgrown by man.

Love casteth out all fear and makes of humanity a unit. True manhood can have no interests which are not universal interests. Selfish ambition has held men in all walks of life, to put their "light under a bushel" instead of "on a candlestick." "Ye are the light of the world. A city that sets on an hill cannot be hid." Then let your light shine. Millions have starved while eating juiceless

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verbiages of doctrine, in their vain effort to get at the real sustenance which these wordy concoctions covered, or eclipsed. Many souls have groped blindly in darkness while seeking the Light which shines for all.

It is plainly the duty of every teacher to inform those who are now in ignorance, and to share with them the measure of wealth he holds. The truth should be so presented that the plain, common people, the untutored minds, can comprehend it. In many instances, sentences containing grand truths could be selected from the precepts of preachers, which are clothed in such language, and with such technical stilted dignity, that pedantry is more readily discernible than truth, at least by the novice. In days that are past, a priesthood, of questionable value to the world, kept the truth, as it was discovered, carefully guarded within their own precincts, fearing if this knowledge became universal, that their power over the people would speedily end.

This seclusive spirit has been, through a misconception of right methods, transmitted to our present

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condition of society. The country Squire, by virtue of this fact, is almost worshipped by his fellow citizens; he is looked upon as a creation of some special order. So powerful is he, that a line fence cannot be run, a farm cannot be sold, or a last will and testament be drawn, without his assistance.

Even that tinker of timepieces, commonly called a jeweler, examines the lagging mechanism of some recreant watch which is unable longer to respond to the pressure of the mainspring, simply because of accumulated dust, assumes as wise a look as he can resurrect, shakes his head dolefully and, with an air of mystery, tells you that he finds the jewels all worn out or broken; that it will be a difficult matter, at best, to repair it, but nevertheless for a certain fee, his wisdom will be equal to the emergency.

The dentist will look in the mouth presented to him for inspection, and after a few moments of careful examination, wrinkling his face with significant frowns, he finds the majority of its masticators, from the incisors to the molars, in a serious condition. He will proceed to inform his victim of this terrible

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state of affairs in such language of technicalities as to leave no doubt in the sufferer's mind of his fearful need of professional services, although no word uttered has been understood.

Note the physician, likewise, as he feels the pulse-beat and applies the stethoscope to the heart of his patient. What a wise, solemn look mantles his heretofore placid face! It needs but an ominous shake of his head to cause the elastic mercury of hope to descend the human thermometer to the zero point. Then follows a deluge of information, dressed in such language that the patient, comprehending absolutely nothing of what has been said, concludes that his case must be a very bad one indeed.

Alas for religion, pure religion! Religion that once burned brightly with purest flame upon the primitive hearthstone of life! Thy light has been hidden by an unworthy priesthood, under the bushel of creedal and dogmatic servitude. It will be the work of an intelligent laity, ridded of priestcraft, to uncover its glorious light and place it again, tenderly and reverently, upon the golden candlestick of Truth,

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where it can be seen and felt by all men, and thus answer the demands of practical life.

The social fabric of our civilization is also distinguished for its ceremonial forms, empty pageants, and its lack of sincerity and veracity. Social life is so crowded with this cold, unfeeling, unnatural formalism, that sound common-sense is often offended and feels itself compelled to step aside, and behold this hollow thing strut and stride before it.

Thus this technical verbiage in law and philosophy, this dogmatic and creedal clutter in religion, this cold formalism in social life, each serve to transport its devotees into the clouds of unrealities, where they flit about upon the wings of stilted dignity, blind faith, and social egotism, until, as with all who aspire to a false height, their wings fail them, and they fall to mundane levels.

The real sphere of man's action is just as wide as his interest in humanity, and it is not usually of the philosopher or scientist that complaint of a secret hoarding of truth could be made, for his services cannot receive too great a meed of praise from all who

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are seeking knowledge. As Carlyle says, "He has to travel without highway, companionless, through an inorganic chaos, and leaves his own life and faculty lying there, as a partial contribution towards pushing some highway through." He is not infrequently the companion of poverty which teaches him many severe lessons, and he is ever filled with that courage which can pray to

> "Give him a spirit that on life's rough sea,
> Would have his sails filled with a lusty wind,
> Even until his sailyards tremble — his masts crack —
> And his rapt ship runs on her sides so low
> That she drinks water, and her keel plows air."

Yet, after spending his life in digging from their hidden places rare nuggets of golden truth, he often covers them again under a verbose pile of technicalities, where it is almost as difficult to find them as when they were originally discovered.

Never fear of robbing self by sharing all you may gain of truth with others. Jesus taught openly in the temple to the multitude. If you have freely received, freely give, and the recipient of your bounties will render back new powers of energy and a

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grander inspiration for renewed efforts in obtaining a larger truth, with mutual profit. "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men." Let each contribute whatever light and knowledge he has gained to illuminate the darkness of other lives.

Looking, on one occasion, at what seemed to be a rude and uncouth cross, in a panoramic exhibition of Pilgrim's Progress, emotions were rather repelled than excited, and while wondering why such an exhibition should appear in the midst of so many beautiful paintings, a light suddenly flashed upon it, a little film of gauze was raised, and a sublime conception of the Cross appeared. What produced this magical change? It was light — the potent agency of light! Then project the light of truth into the darkened recesses of life, and the revelation will be magical. Lift the veil of false covering from all acquired truth, and

> "Let the light
> Pour through fair windows, broad as Truth itself
> And high as God."

Throw all possible light into the vibrating ocean of life's expression. Every word uttered and every

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thought excited produces a vibration in the atmosphere, never entirely ceasing, leaving us still moving among the inaudible words of our progenitors. The voices of Beecher, of Paine, Parker, and Phillips are echoing still. There is a sense in which every uttered word lives forever. It lives to influence the speaker as well as that vast audience of a world of listeners.

Nature is like the sun, she is a storehouse of light, and the light is there to be shed abroad. Nature is like the clouds, a storehouse of waters, to descend in showers of blessing. There is nothing in Nature but what is meant to be distributed, and Nature and Man are one. No one is enriched by reserving and hoarding any mental, moral or spiritual attainment. If you know how to get wealth of any kind, tell the world how to get it; it will not detract from your opportunity to get more, and a reluctance to impart such information is at best leaving your methods open to suspicion, and relating you to selfishness.

To enjoy the goal of Truth, its price must be placed upon God's great altar of human needs. If you have

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traveled and beheld the fairest realms, climbed the summits of the Alps, or traversed valleys of picturesque beauty, project all this harvest of beautiful results into human life, and you will add to its varied expression a freshness, a vivacity, a force, an energy and a power that will prove immortal.

The earth of the past was conceived as a flat surface simply because ignorance declared it so. God made the earth and consequently it is of a spherical form, and through his human agents, when they were developed to receive the same, he proclaimed this truth concerning it. This was a proclamation of far more importance than the world could then comprehend. A different model or pattern for thought was placed before mankind by this grand revelation. Prior to this revealment men and institutions were like unto the shape of their earth — flat and angular. It is said that all expressions of architectural thought in the spirit world tend to the oval or circular.

With this oval, symmetrical conception, the cubical angularities of life began to be moulded into the

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spherical beauty of man's new conception of God's thought. The Soul-man has since then come into nearer conformity with God's pattern. Man's ability of advancement, progression and utility is to be seen in the symmetry of his mind. A young man once desiring to become a dentist, visited a gentleman of that profession for some advice as to his probable ability for future success in that line of work. The doctor simply presented the young man with a square block of plaster and said, "Carve out of that cube the best shaped egg you can, after which I will render my judgment of your ability." It was a most practical test, the man of experience knowing the result of the aspirant's efforts would be a type of his soul's symmetry and unfoldment. The individual adjustment to all other individuals is proportionate to universal soul-symmetry. Perfect adjustment upon the soul plane should be the goal of all striving. Make the sphericity of self a chief aim, and then by the charm of which such a self-hood is capable, carefully and tenderly endeavor to round off and smooth the character of all other selves by projecting

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the truth which you have gained into a world of need. Your soul will not realize its God-given birthright of freedom until every other soul is also free, as the universal brotherhood of man is recognized as an essential feature of the Fatherhood of God.

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CHAPTER XI.

RECEPTIVITY.

HUMANITY is related to none others than its best friends. Conditions which are the best agencies for progress, at any given time, may not be the same which obtain for that end, at some subsequent period. The careful observer can scarcely fail to conclude that even the most unpleasant circumstances, which gain admittance to life, linger no longer in one's surroundings, than rebellion against them ceases, or until they are recognized as friends in disguise, and their mission appropriated. All are ever living in the midst of experiences, not one of which occurs by chance, or is sent, save to teach valuable and necessary lessons.

These seemingly unfriendly companions find certain sharp corners of character, or disposition, which they alone can destroy, and as soon as their work has been perfected, they beat a quick retreat to make

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room for some other operative agency in the realm of cause and effect. It is a mathematical certainty that two things cannot occupy the same place at the same time. Everything in Nature is an agency of causation; and all natural agencies find a sequence in effects, never ceasing to apply their energy until that result is established. As Nature is strictly economical in the use of her energy, no agent of cause remains operative a moment after its work is properly done.

It is not wise to conclude that all sorrow, pain and disease are the products of nature, for there are laws also operative which are very closely allied to the realm of perverted naturalism. It is not true that all the ills of life are the product of divine wisdom, or, as the theologian would affirm, "sent by God"; on the contrary, they are always the production of human ignorance. Wisdom is the unrelenting enemy of ignorance, and the moulding process of her laws, even though severe, is always the voice of God. Perverted naturalism will suffer infliction until destroyed by illumined Nature. Ignorance of health,

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or fear of disease, upon any plane of life, will be visited by wisdom, God's agent, until illness is recognized as an unreality, therefore, having no power. Welcome and receive this divine teacher and render a willing and most studious obedience to her counsels. Man's life should be like the day, more beautiful in the evening; or like the Summer which glows with promise of the coming Autumn, with its golden sheaves of harvest and fruitage.

It is always best to receive all natural agencies philosophically, and with a soul-passivity, adjust them to our needs. If the seed could speak, it might raise an objection to being placed in the dark, cold ground, and the farmer who placed it there might be considered its natural enemy. It might prefer being placed in some dry, sunny place, but what would be the relative results of the seeds thus dealt with? The one in the dark ground will germinate, and expand, until it bursts into the shining air, and finally becomes productive of elements of nourishment for human needs; the other adds nothing to the common good of life. If primitive, angular

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humanity had had no other experience than that of delight and pleasure, it would have remained cubical and grotesque, and would never have contributed to the beautiful symmetry of God's purposes.

The shortsightedness of mankind in its novitiate state, is quite incapable of comprehending the ends or finalities of divine purposes. The attention is so closely concentrated upon the consideration of means, that ends are often forgotten. What seems favorable to present enjoyment is most acceptable to the average person, while a broader view would perhaps decide the same thing to be the worst of enemies. The boy cannot always understand the necessity of being closely applied to study. Perchance he sees another boy who is not forced to such discipline, and by this comparison chafes under the requirements of school life. In a few years, however, the results of these widely divergent means appear in the light of consequences. Reflection upon results, on the one hand, always generates thankfulness for the discipline received, and on the other, remorse for having evaded it.

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Mankind, at whatever age of life, is in a school of discipline, and he who is wise enough to appropriate the means, which are of divine appointment, will gather sunshine from the retrospect and find himself equipped with power, which experience has given, to cope with all the duties of coming time. Learn to utilize every stroke of nature, live in the confusion and noise of life's battles; lift with those who lift, and receive upon your shoulders a fair share of life's burdens. To repel these features is only to postpone the testing hour. Perform the present duties now, and if, by so doing, you shall have merited a rest to-morrow, it will doubtless be found that that rest will come in an activity which knows no jar, because of a proper adjustment to every duty, through the experiences of the past. Idleness is not rest. Rest consists in a never-ceasing activity in doing good. Receive and welcome such work as it is sent; train the brain and correspondingly the muscles, so that all labor will become but a process of exhilaration.

> "Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
> Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment."

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It needs but a moment's reflection to see the wisdom of this Shakespearean advice. It will always prove advantageous to be receptive to every expression of thought. Receptivity to true thought, like the welcoming of experience, will construct before the thinking apparatus a sieve of intelligence, the meshes of which will, with unerring precision, separate the good from the bad, the valuable from the worthless, and the wholesome from the unhealthy.

The seemingly insignificant things of life frequently become most valuable teachers. It is a truth, even of giants, that "a little child shall lead them." The apparently trite circumstance of the falling apple proclaimed a truth to the world of vast importance. Apples had been previously falling from the trees for centuries, but this particular apple not only fell to the ground, but at the same time fell into a receptive mind which utilized the phenomenon for the establishment of a universal law.

Spiders had been spinning their webs across mankind's pathway for thousands of years, and they had been pushed away as a nuisance, but one of these webs

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crossed the nose of Sir Samuel Brown, and from his nose, sensitive nerves (conveyors of thought) extended to the receptive brain with the result that from that web was recognized the "Suspension Bridge." "Go to the ant, thou sluggard," and receive instruction. All books, sermons, and even conversations on the street corners may not be altogether good, but each of these will be very poor indeed if they contain no helpful thought.

On the rocks of the seashore may be seen marine creatures living, when the tide is out, not in the pools it leaves, but on the dry and naked rocks, and in the broiling sun. Twice a day the tide comes in, when they open their shelly mouths and drink enough to last them until its return. Can there be any good reason for humanity to copy the methods of these creatures? Should the soul ever be closed, or held in seclusion from God's great ocean of wealth? That soul will be the richest which follows the receding tide of circumstances and plunges into the deep sea of life's multitudinous phenomena. Sow beside all waters; secrete thy pearls from the deep recesses

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of every experience, none of which can be spared by the receptive soul who craves realization of at-one-ment with God.

The beautiful lily, tossing upon the crested waves, is the embodiment of purity and sweetness, although it gained its expression from the filth of its earthly anchorage. That lily is the production of the thought of God. He also is rearing something fairer, a beautiful temple of life, for His indwelling spirit. It is rising from the confusion and dirt of mundane experiences, but as it is reared through the turbulent waters of vicissitudes, it will be purified and then glorified.

> "White souls fall not, oh my poet,
> They rise to the fairest place."

Humanity is naturally receptive. If the gates of wrongly-directed energy are closed, and wider avenues opened, good thought, knowledge and power will more readily flow in. These qualities pour from a reservoir having limitless resources, and as incapable of being exhausted as eternity is of having an end. Let the soul be ever open to receive each les-

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son of wisdom from the Great Teacher, recognizing only the Good in every experience.

It has been persistently impressed upon the mind by certain teachers that all things of this world are but bubbles of vanity, and that the real, enduring things are reserved for the next sphere of consciousness. It would not be in harmony with good judgment to deny to much of this world's wealth, a transitory nature. What the next world is, or what it contains of either duty or pleasure, very little is absolutely known. It would seem to be in harmony with good reason to suppose that all things on this plane of expression are for use, and that in their use an experience will be gained which will be of incalculable assistance in performing the duties of the next sphere of life. It is right to receive all of God's bounties, and enrich the soul with the proper use of all such possessions. Through a proper reception of the lessons which the things of this life teach, all the words and letters of the great book of Nature are daguerreotyped on the spirit; they are forever held as priceless legacies upon the tablet of the soul, and read as by a beam of light from the Central Sun.

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CHAPTER XII.

INDIVIDUAL EFFORT.

SELFISHNESS is the language of the personal man, and it is not until he outgrows the lower personality that his diviner self, that individuality which is immortal, gains recognition and expression.

Selfishness is a cruel tyrant. It perpetuates antagonisms in society, lends its approval to war, smiles upon the uneven conflict between the wealthy classes and the poverty-stricken masses, and renders more grievous the burdens of the toiling millions.

Personal consideration sanctioned the cruel sin of negro slavery and now endorses a worse kind of serfdom. It generates hypocrisy and cupidity, and casts a shadow of sadness and gloom upon a world whose every pulse-beat should throb with the warm tides of universal, unselfish Love.

No man is doing his best for society who is not making the most of himself by developing and

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unfolding the angel within. It is an obligation that rests with every individual toward the establishment of order and harmony on earth. Discordant melody will obtain until perfect harmony is appreciated, and then local frets and jarring tones will not be noted in Evolution's majestic pace, as man comes into perfect vibration with the throbbing of the Infinite Heart.

There is love enough in universal self-hood, mouldering under the rubbish pile of selfishness, to remove from the world every barbaric relic of torture, convert every hovel into a house of decency and comfort, transform all dens of infamy into homes of purity, relieve humanity from its nightmare of fear, remove all physical and moral diseases, subdue and control all passions, until the kingdom of heaven shall dawn for the race while still embodied on earth.

The acquirement of the highest unfoldment of the individual is enhanced when equal advantages and equal power to utilize the same are possessed by all. When a universal love is projected toward the interests of society, the possibility for all to live in

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the enjoyment of freedom and equality will be realized. But too much time is wasted in waiting for favorable opportunities for individual effort, when often the severe hardships, disappointments and trials best serve to evolve the true inner beauty and value of the soul.

They, it is said, who were clothed "in white robes" were those who had come out of great tribulation, whose progress had fared, over the thistle-beds of life, the experience of constant friction.

Nature's evolutionary unfoldment proceeds over similar paths. Through cyclone, earthquake and devastating floods, expressions of beauty and fruitage are finally reached. Each little atom performs its part in shaping and moulding the perfect sphere. Likewise individuals lose their sense of separateness, one from the other, in a community of interests for the advancement of the race. Each one then regards its self-hood solely as an instrument to use and be used for the universal good. Hence comes the necessity for exertion, the individual effort of every soul as co-worker with the Over-Soul, through Its

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revealment in Nature and in man. At this shrine, no selfish desires can be heard or answered, since the personality is merged into the real self-hood, which it is the purpose of life to evolve. "Every human soul is a sculptor," and all selfish desires and ambitions must feel the keen-edged chisel of this inexorable artist.

"The old world is effete; there man with man
Jostles, and in the brawl for means to live,
Life is trod under foot, — Life, the one block
Of marble that 's vouchsafed wherefrom to carve
Our great thoughts, white and Godlike, to shine down
The future, Life, the irredeemable block,
Which one o'erhasty chisel-dint oft mars,
Scanting our room to cut the features out
Of our full hope, so forcing us to crown
With a mean head the perfect limbs, or
Leave the God's face glowing o'er a satyr's trunk —
Failure's brief epitaph."

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CHAPTER XIII.

EVOLUTION AND INVOLUTION.

EVOLUTION has never been properly defined, because no definition has as yet comprehended it altogether; and what involution is in its truest, broadest sense, no man has adequately discerned. A definition serves only the purpose of the yardstick in measuring a web of cloth; it is the yardstick of the mind, gauges the capacity of mental faculties, or of man's ability to comprehend. Evolution accommodates its pace to the operation of natural law, and man has no very definite idea of the extent of natural law, so all-comprehensive is it, in its grand unfoldment, since finite minds cannot grasp the methods of the Infinite.

The word "revolve" always conveys the idea of something turning round like a wheel, or planet. Eliminate the "r" from the word, and evolve is gained, which is the same word with its root changed. The

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same idea is conveyed of something round, spherical, not necessarily turning on its axis, but of something round being ejected, poured forth, as a man would pour out a barrel of apples, the little spheres rolling gracefully into some other receptacle. It is the destiny of evolution to reveal to all mankind the sphericity of Life, to show forth the beauty and symmetry that is possible, and in that revealment to awaken the knowledge of human angularities out of which growth must obtain, to enlarge progressive minds with a power to give knowledge to others from out themselves, by flashing back the light of revealment upon the path already trod.

Involution very easily expresses the reverse of evolution, but is the opposite of evolution only in mode of expression; its process being peculiarly the same, as in the example of the man pouring out apples which are evolving from the barrel, while the new receptacle is involving that which was evolved. Evolution and involution are but systematic modes of expression. These processes are eternal, having had no beginning and are to have no ending

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Involved in human life are the principles of creation, the power of evolving; this being the product of the fact that Somebody, or Something, somewhere evolved this possibility into man, who received the involution of that which was evolved. The primal truth of evolution proclaims that the Source from which all receive this involved potency is God, the Fountain Head of all things — God, not as a personality, but as a contraction of the word Good. Intensify its meaning, and Omnipotent Good, as a deific principle, becomes God, the great Fountain Head, the Some Thing, that is, the Sum total of all things, the Totality of everything. This is what we mean by God. Man is the result of evolutionary laws, for evolution is but an expression of natural law, operative. All Nature and man are but instruments, keeping time to the inexorable rhythm of God's baton.

From the great Infinite Heart of all Truth, Life and Goodness, there has been involved in every human being, almost infinite possibilities; no matter how low he may be, the gradual process of divine unfoldment must go on toward a potency in quality,

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of God, the Divine Perfection. The Infinite Heart beats and throbs with the physical heart-beat of every child of earth. This constant outbreathing in involution, is ever teaching in many ways the purpose of this present expression of conscious life, which is one in principle and essence with the Godhood involved therein.

The question might be asked, "What is the reason for this process?" a query which can only be partially answered. God is considered as Perfection, yet is no more so than man is, in a certain sense. What is more perfect than a young babe? Look upon its eyes, its sweet mouth, each curve and soft outline of the little form, pure and delicate as a snowdrop fallen from the gardens of the angels into the mother's lap. Nothing ever gains expression in the universe more divine than the little child, and yet with all its grace and beauty of attributes, it is perfect only as a child. It must expand and unfold through long days of external life into a riper manhood or womanhood, must be perfected through the development of evolutionary laws.

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On the vegetable plane the same law silently holds sway, and every plant or weed conforms itself invariably to the aim of that law which compels it to grow. In the silent unfolding of that beautiful sisterhood of the floral kingdom, no fault-finding or grumbling is ever heard during the process of evolution; nothing is discerned but an earnest endeavor to make the world more desirable, both to soul and sense, by its expression. This kingdom seems to evolve especially for the sweetening of all other life which is capable of appreciating it. This emphasizes a fact regarding individual life, viz.: that every man is capable of involving into some one else that which he holds of principle, essence, or wisdom. This is a part of the process of involution; it endows the thing involved with the capacity of evolving as well.

It will be a bright day for the world when humanity learns that it is not made up of isolated individuals, but is one vast solidarity, the united family of God. God is working out the process of life with every one, and this evolutionary unfolding is going on, higher and better continually, throughout all

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eternity. All life is activity and must bring out the involved principles of Life, according to the chart of God's divine purposes. When this involved principle of one's life pervades the character, it helps others to join the great procession of evolution.

That which is involved is the godhood in man, a possession of his from eternity. God is All. You abide in Him and He in you, your Father which art in Heaven — that kingdom within. Life is given for the holy process of perfecting self-hood in growth, as the child is perfected in its maturity. Humanity is like God only in quality, not as perfect as He is in quantity, but the quantity of conscious nearness to divine attributes will increase just as fast as one cultivates the Godlike talent that has been given, by joining God's bank of interest.

All souls throughout the universal spheres are living the same life with humanity, the same life with God, consequently they are, in a certain sense, God. In the final analysis, this truth will reveal itself to every logical thinker, that he is not only living a life with God, but is living the life of God.

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broken, and while development from this moment is more apparent, it is nevertheless no more pronounced or rapid than while in the invisible state of embryo.

The standard by which mankind judges of the progress or of the quality of any soul is through the power of soul discernment. But, while many people have made a wonderful progress which is observed and understood, that progress which has been made, which humanity fails to see and understand, is infinitely more marvellous and wonderful than that which has been observed. The goodness, or lack of it, in a friend will be depicted in the light of the observer's soul-perception of the true value of man's character. If these observations are not expressed in words, they excite a thought-current, which goes out into the world as a living power, revealing the important fact that even the character of a thought should be well grounded and established upon the basic rock of truth in soul consciousness.

All features of divine law are beautiful, but perhaps one of the most delightful attributes of the law under consideration is that it compels progression.

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Progression is one of its first duties toward humanity. It is a question, indeed, if much progress had been made by mankind, had it not been for this exacting, inexorable law of Nature that reaches out its strong arm and places its hand on the shoulder of the indolent, as the policeman places his hand on the recreant citizen, who for the time is an uncivilized being. So this divine law, like the policeman, takes hold of the ignorant and unprogressive natures and leads, drags, and forces them on, until it brings them to that point where they begin to feel the need of co-operating themselves with the law.

Law seems to many a hard taskmaster. It is, or is not, according to the development of the individual. What matters it to some that a law exists prohibiting a man to steal? They are not in the least affected by that law; and yet there are people cognizant of this law, through its seeming tyranny in its relation to them, because it runs against the natural, *un*natural proclivities of the man who wants to steal without incurring any penalty.

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God,"

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the natural man is not, for he, the natural man, is subject to the Divine Will. The natural mind of man is good, and every natural act of man is good. When he commits an error he is giving expression to a perverted naturalness, which is another term for ignorance. Perverted naturalism must evolve into the natural. It is natural for man to progress and advance; he is a natural conqueror, a natural grower. Man, the real ego, or self-hood, while residing in that expression known as the human, is ofttimes very nearly dormant, or dead, until the self, or real manhood, is recognized by the man himself, until he himself has had an introduction to himself. It may not seem natural for him to progress, but the law compels him to, until he personally lends his aid to that law which evermore demands progression.

It is well for us to consider by what means we, as individuals, can make the best progress. A wrong course means a weary retracing of steps, beginning the journey over again. There is a great diversity of opportunities vouchsafed to man, and as a crowning feature, the brain was given to establish him as

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an arbiter. A great many people think they are progressive, simply because they are successful in certain very limited directions, who when awakened, will discover that their lives are largely failures. It is necessary, therefore, that the spiritual as well as the mental judgment should be carefully exercised so as to correctly realize what true progress is. The value of any one's progress might be questioned who has left undone even a single day's work.

Man is weaving a web, and each day the click of the shuttle, with lightning speed, sends its thread through the web. If, through neglect some day, the shuttle fails to perform its duty, the thread is left out and a tedious, unravelling process is necessary to correct that error, for the web must be perfect. "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." This seems to many a task that would be absolutely impossible to fulfil, and so it is; you cannot be perfect now, but in quality you are just as perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. You can never be in extent, until every duty of life is perfectly fulfilled. Then send the shuttle through the web every

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day, and make the design perfect as you go along.

The grandeur and beauty of God's process is seen in this fact, that He has taken down all barriers and limitations of time, and given to man Eternity, in which to unfold and perfect himself.

There is a progression beyond this plane, far superior to look upon, than that which is possible here in the mundane sphere. But frequently people pass into that fairer spirit world, who have left their life webs very imperfect, with many opportunities neglected. The web is therefore a very sorry spectacle. How, then, get back to the dropped thread? How retrace that intricate pattern? The law of progress has also kindly provided for such sad needs as these. Yet, progress in spirit life is utterly impossible until the duties of this world have been attended to. Forgiveness of this error, if indeed forgiveness is ever extended to the man of errors, does not repair a single flaw. Forgiveness of sin is one thing, annulling its consequences, quite another. No one has power to forgive sin save God alone, and though He forgives error a thousand times, He has

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established a natural law that declares thou shalt pay the penalty to the "uttermost farthing."

That person who, with the step of an elastic conscience, slips gracefully along the pathway of life, will find his journey out there in the world of souls not very delightful, for, as a spirit, he will find himself obliged to take up old conditions, which he carelessly glided over, and painfully correct them. Heaven abhors a sloven, and will not permit of a slovenly job. One must be a man indeed to travel the highway of progress in the spirit world.

Progress means activity here on earth; it is the watchword of life in the World Eternal. There are but three possible positions for mankind, viz.: retrogression, balance, and progression. The most unnatural is the first, the most difficult and almost impossible, the second, while the only really natural is the latter process. Progression is one with activity, — it always has been and always will be. There are two ways of getting out of the world of human consciousness, — to wear out, and to rust out. It will take longer to wear out than to rust out, for the law of atrophy is a cruel tyrant.

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The tyranny of atrophy and decay holds no dominion or power over that aspiring life, which, through earnest, well-directed effort, squares all conduct of life with the operations of natural law. Then work, WORK, WORK, yes, *work* every day and every night. All toilers will be the better for it, but should be careful in the selection of their kind of work. The world is brighter and better to-day because of what has been done by every loyal, tireless soul since yesterday.

Eternal progress! Thank God for that hour when the truth of eternal progression was revealed to the world, a growth which is unending, for however far one may advance, however high he may mount the ladder of progress, he will never reach the topmost round, for God covers the whole of it. All souls, becoming more spherical by mundane experiences, and thus more perfectly reflecting the Deific pattern, will be ever moving onward and upward, one in a certain devious path, and one in another, BUT ALL ROADS MEET, OUT YONDER.

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